

Hook's Point

Turn around and get back on 190th Street and head back to Stage Coach Road/R21. Turn right/south onto R21. The stage coach route paralleled the road on your left/east until it crossed where the road meets Big Bear Road and then again where 330th Street/D56 intersection occurs. Keep on this road past the Oakwood cemetery on your right/west. Hook's Point settlement was located about one-half mile west. This was where the first stage coach route entered Hamilton County. Turn left/east onto Hook's Point Drive.

Tunnel Mill

Turn right/east onto 340th Street, then left/north onto Erickson Avenue. Take a right/east onto 330th Street/D56. Turn left/north onto Tunnel Mill Road/R27. Just over the bridge the east-west stage coach route from Homer to Tunnel Mill would have crossed the road. Tunnel Mill was a stage coach stop.

Tremaine

Continue north until 280th Street. Turn right/east and just over the bridge, on your right was Bone's/Ross/Excelsior Mill and on your left was Tremaine settlement. Tremaine settlement was very near the site of Hope Hollow, where Wilson Brewer family (first settlers of what is now Webster City) wintered their first year in the county. The stage coach route traveled north to Webster City and south to Tunnel Mill from this point. Continue on 280th Street, turning right/south onto Briggs Woods Road/Highway 17.

Red Cedar

Follow this road and turn right onto 290th Street. Just before it turns into Inkapaduta Avenue, the stage coach route would have crossed the road and then almost follow the same route Inkapaduta Avenue takes. Before the intersection of 300th Street the Red Cedar/Saratoga settlement was located on the left/east side of the road. It was a stage stop. From here, the stage ran about one-half mile south before turning west to Tunnel Mill.

Completing the Tour

Turn left/east onto 300th Street. Then turn right/south onto Briggs Woods Road/Highway 17. Go through Stanhope and turn left/east onto 380th Street/D65. Continue straight on this road all the way to return to Randall and our starting point.

While You Are Touring

Spend Extra Time in Hamilton County as You Enjoy the Scenic Stagecoach Routes Tour!

DINING

Ellsworth
Jewell
Kamrar
Stanhope

Stratford
Webster City
Williams - off of I-35

PICNIC DINING FOOD

Grocery stores are in Jewell, Stratford and Webster City. Locker & Market is in Stanhope.

SEASONAL PICNIC PLACES

City Parks in:

Ellsworth
Jewell
Kamrar
Randall

Stanhope
Stratford
Webster City
Williams

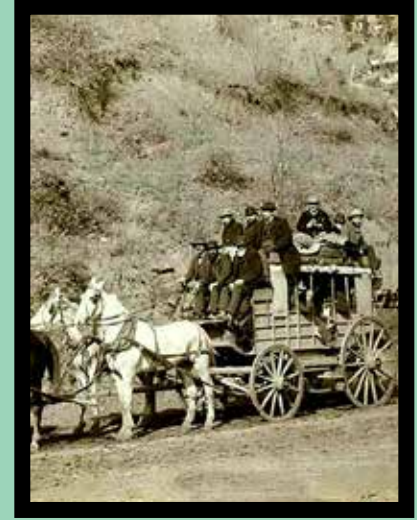
Rural Parks:

Kendall Young
Briggs Woods

Bells Mills
Little Wall Lake

A Scenic Drive

Celebrating Our Heritage
Rich in Tradition
Rooted in History



= Hamilton County, Iowa =

Stagecoach Routes

STAGECOACH ROUTES



Brochure Sponsored By:

HAMILTON COUNTY
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Blairsburg | Ellsworth | Jewell | Kamrar | Randall
Stanhope | Stratford | Webster City | Williams

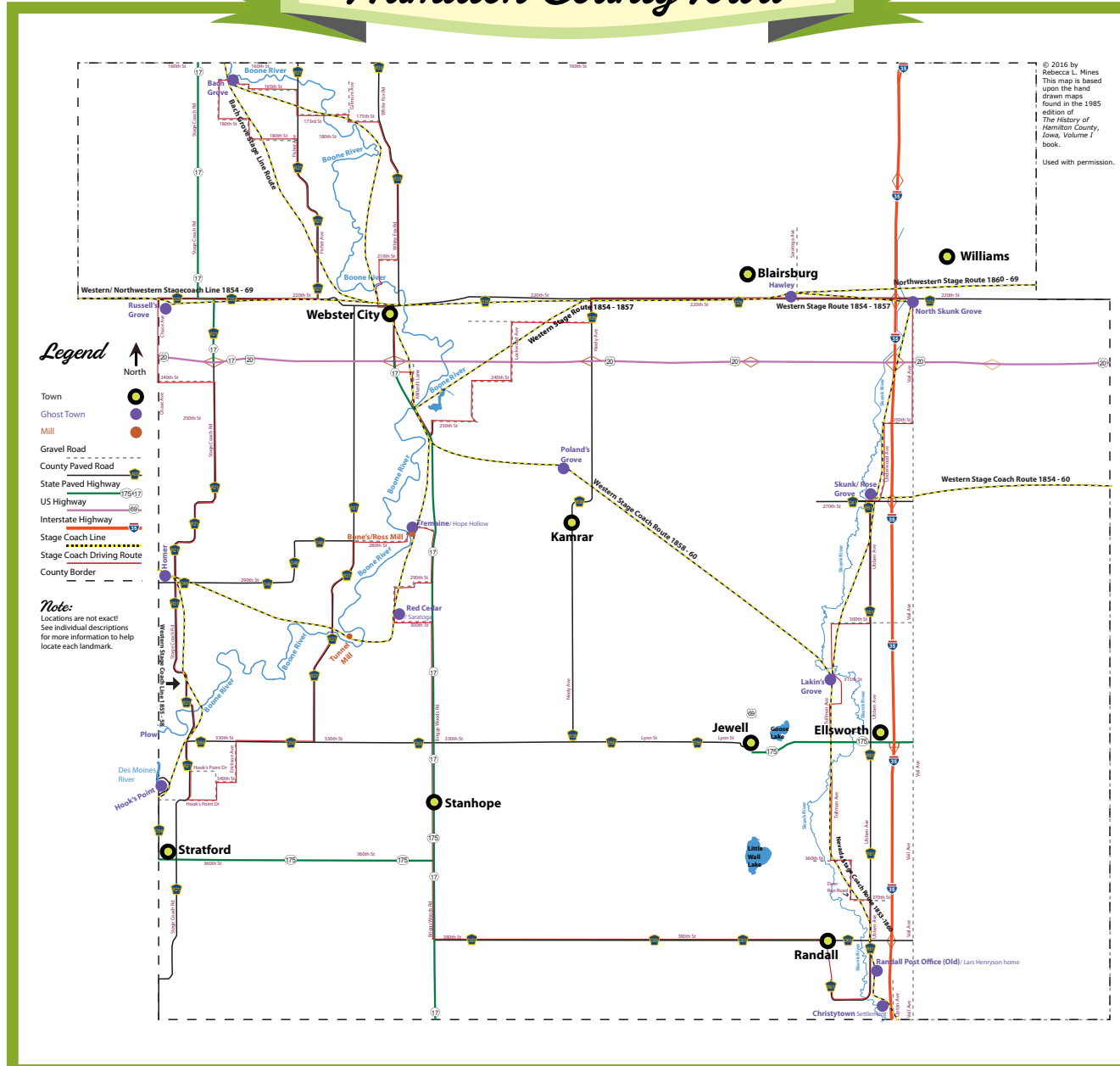


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HAMILTON COUNTY
DEVELOPMENT
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Hamilton County Iowa



Stagecoach Travel

Mail for the settlers was an important need. First, the mail was carried by man on foot or horseback. Then the stagecoach companies extended routes into the area.

The Western Stage Company pushed its routes into Hamilton County in the 1850's. The stagecoach business flourished until 1869 when the first train crossed the county and entered Webster City.

Travel on the stage was difficult. The drivers were instructed to keep the coaches going in all kinds of weather. Crossing the streams and rivers presented the greatest difficulty until bridges were built.

Most of the early passengers were men, as few women made the overland journey on the stagecoaches. The stage traveled at an average pace of 3 1/2 miles an hour and carried a maximum of six passengers.

Passenger fares varied, ranging from five cents a mile in good weather to ten cents a mile in adverse weather. Men were expected to provide a fence rail, which was carried along to help move the stagecoach out of the mud when the coaches bogged down.

The Stagecoach Tour

This stagecoach route can be traveled starting at any point and preceding in a counter-clockwise direction until you complete the tour in about two hours. For the purposes of the tour brochure, it will begin in the town of Randall.

Christy Town

Starting at the town of Randall, at the lower portion of the route, drive southeast on Tollman Avenue, turn left/east at Christy Town Road/R61. The road curves left/north at Riverside Road. As you turn north, you will see the site of Christy Town on your right/east, an early settlement. It is now the Riverside Bible Camp.

An 1863 stagecoach map shows the route starting in Nevada, then onto Story City before entering Hamilton County southeast of Christy Town on Upton Avenue.

Randall's First Post Office

Continue north on Christy Town Road. About one mile north, on the east/right side of the road, you will find a large farm home.

This is the Lars Henryson home, which served as an early stagecoach stop and the early Randall Post Office.

A large group of Norwegian people came to the county and settled in the Ellsworth/Story City area in 1856. Among them was Lars Henryson/Henderson. He owned 2,200 acres of land before he died in 1896. On April 15, 1863, a post office was established in his home. It appears on early maps as Randall P. O.

Rural Free Delivery (RFD)

John A. Cooper came to Hamilton County in 1859 and settled in the timber of the Skunk River. Cooper and his wife, Mary, were the first to locate in this area. In the spring of 1874, Cooper had an accident when his team ran away. The injuries left him paralyzed and an invalid until his death. Mr. Cooper lived on the Star Route and he requested that the stagecoach driver deliver his mail to his home on the way.

Mr. Henderson wrote to Washington and received permission to do so provided that Cooper erect a box beside the road to allow the driver to deposit the mail without dismounting. This is thought to perhaps be one of the first instances of rural free delivery in the United States.

At 370th Street, turn left/west, then right/north onto Deer Run Road. Turn left/west onto 360th Street. At the intersection of 360th and Tollman, straight ahead Coopers mailbox was located near the river. Turn right/north onto Tollman Avenue.

Callanan

The town of Callanan was located near the intersection of Tollman Avenue and 340th Street. It was a boom town that had a fast and furious life of less than three years. The town was laid out on April 19, 1878 and faded by early 1882. This town sprang up after the demise of the stage coach route.

It soon became the scene of many wild parties and liquor available both day and night. Law enforcement was ineffective and drunken brawls were frequent. Two murders were committed on the streets of Callanan during its short existence.

The population of Callanan was about 200. Among the residents were professionals of trades such as physicians & surgeons, contractors & builders, attorneys, a notary public, and three painters.

There was also a boarding house, hardware store, drug store, dry goods store, pool hall, and barber shop. The Callanan Brick Company, a blacksmith, a carriage shop, a wagon shop, a meat market, and a boot and shoe maker were also operating there.

Lakin's Grove

Continue north on Tollman Avenue to Highway 175/330th Street. The town of Ellsworth is located to the east. Cross Highway 175.

The road will turn right/east for a short ways before turning left/north. Follow the road left/northwest at 315th junction. Here, located to the left of the 312th Street and Tollman Avenue junction, by the river, was the community of Lakin's Grove.

Lakin's Grove was the first settlement in the eastern part of Hamilton County. In the fall of 1854, Luther Lakin settled on the southwest bank of the Skunk River. Lakin and several relatives built their homes in a grove of trees and established a large farm that became the center of this small community.

A post office was established in 1857. The town existed for about 20 years. It had a stage house, a post office, general store, blacksmith shop, school house, and a few homes. Lakin's Grove vanished with the passing of the stagecoach era.

Lakin's Grove served as a stagecoach stop for the Western Stage Line connecting Newton, Nevada, and Story City with Rose Grove and for a few years, the east-west stage from Alden to Newcastle (now Webster City).

We will not travel the northwest stagecoach route out of Lakin's Grove, through Poland's Grove, and onto Webster City.

The Skunk River

The Skunk River was called the Cha Ca Qua by the Sac and Fox Indians. This meant a rank, offensive odor due to the smell of the wild onions that grew along its banks.

Legislative efforts in the past have promoted changing the name back to the Indian name, yet all have failed. To the early day traveler, the Skunk River was famous for its mud and quicksand bottoms.

The pioneers handed down many tales of the difficulties of working the wagons and stagecoaches out of the mud using fence rails that passengers were required to supply.

Rose (Skunk) Grove

Continue right/north on Tollman Avenue. Turn right/east onto 300th Street, then turn left/north, onto Ubben Avenue/R61. North of the intersection of Ubben Avenue/R61 and 270th/D41 was the site of Skunk Grove. This was later renamed Rose Grove.

This settlement was first named for the Skunk River and the grove of trees in the area. Judge Rose served the area as a lawyer and was appointed postmaster here when the post office opened on Jun 9, 1865. A store and hotel were set up to accommodate the travelers.

Rose Grove served as the northern terminus of the stage line from Newton, through Nevada, Story City, and Lakin's Grove.

This stage line met up with the east-west line that passed through Dubuque, Iowa Falls, Alden, Rose Grove, Newcastle (now Webster City), and on to Fort Dodge, Sioux City, and ending in Omaha. This settlement faded when the stage coach line moved farther north through North Skunk Grove.

Little Chicago

Turn right/east onto 270th Street/D41, then turn left/north onto Underwood Avenue. At the intersection of 260th Street, to the left/west, was the village Little Chicago.

It once had a creamery and a general store that was operated by Bertal Belleson. In 1975, part of the original foundation of the creamery still existed, but today there is no longer any sign of it. This hamlet was named for the metropolis of Chicago, purely in jest.

North Skunk Grove

Follow this road until 250th Street. Turn right/east passing under the I-35 highway. Turn left/north onto Vail Avenue. Drive until the intersection of D25.

At the right/southeast corner of this intersection was the stagecoach stop of North Skunk Grove, established in 1865 to shorten the route from Alden to Webster City and the route discontinued the stop in Rose Grove.

For a time, the stage line from the south met the east-west line at a place called North Skunk Grove. There was never a settlement here, only a stage stop where the two lines met.

North Skunk Grove appeared on maps dated 1868 and 1870. The stop was discontinued when the north-south line went directly from Lakin's Grove to Webster City.

Hawley

Turn left/west onto D25. Drive under the Interstate and continue west to the intersection of Saratoga Avenue. To the north about a quarter mile on Saratoga Avenue was the stagecoach stop of Hawley.

Hawley was the third post office in Hamilton County and served as a halfway house for the Western Stage Company line, which ran from Iowa Falls to Webster City. In May of 1866, the Northwestern Stage Company took over the contract for carrying the mail over this route.

The town was platted on December 7, 1857, in anticipation of the Dubuque & Pacific Railroad passing through the site. The stage trip from Iowa Falls to Webster City was too far to travel without making a stop. Hawley Inn was a busy hotel operating in a two story frame building. The post office, kitchen and dining room were on the ground floor with guest rooms upstairs. A barn served as a stable for the horses.

Just north of Hawley was an early day buffalo wallow. In the not-too-distant past, stagecoach tracks were still discernible north of the farm buildings on the Lucille Chantry property that was once Hawley.

John Blair was the promoter of the Dubuque & Sioux City Railroad (later the Illinois Central). Hawley plat owners refused Blair concessions to run the railroad through the town. Blair then platted Blairsburg, naming the town for himself. This cut off all traffic to Hawley so the lots went back for taxes and the land reverted to farmland. Hawley became a ghost town before it even became an official town.

First Route into Webster City

Continue on D25 going west until Neely Avenue/R38. Turn left/south. Just past this intersection, the stage coach route turned south to get to Webster City.

Continue on Neely Avenue/R38, then turn right/west onto 225th Street. Turn left/south onto Lockwood Avenue, right onto 240th Street, left onto Kantor Avenue, and right onto 250th Street. You end up at Briggs Woods Drive.

Right will take you into the Briggs Woods Park. Straight ahead to the Briggs Woods golf course and left to continue the stage coach tour. At the intersection of Highway 17/ Briggs Woods Road is where the stage coach route from Tremaine comes up from your left/south.

Turn right/northwest onto Highway 17/Briggs Woods Road. The route from both the east and south crossed here at "Mallards' Crossing". Cross the Boone River and then turn right/east onto Millard's Lane.

This is the original route into Webster City. Turn left/west onto Cloz Drive. Turn right/north onto Highway 17 and cross Highway 20. The road turns into Superior Street.

Webster City

Continue on Superior Street; turn left/west onto Water Street. In the insurance company parking lot on your left/south was the location of the first post office. Drive to the next street, Seneca Street, and turn right/north. The next street, Dubuque Street, on your left/west about half-way down the block on the south side of the street, was the location of the Western Stage Company stables. The next intersection, Bank Street - on the left where Seneca Street Saloon is located, was the Willson House. It was a hotel and the stage coach stop.

Continue on Seneca Street to Second Street. Turn left/west and go through the business district to Prospect Street. Turn left/north onto Prospect Street. Go over the railroad tracks and turn left/west onto Lucas Street; turn right/north onto East Street. Just before you turn the curve, look to your left. On the left/west of the railroad bridge which crosses the Boone River was the crossing this stage coach route took. The railroad runs parallel and just east of the old stage coach route as is heads north.

McLaughlin's Ford

Continue taking the East Street curve to Des Moines Street. Turn left/north, go over the bridge and turn right/east onto 210th Street. At the dead end turn left/north onto White Fox Road/R33. You will see the railroad on your left. Turn left/west onto 175th Street, cross the railroad tracks. This Street will curve and turn into Gillmore Avenue, and then 173rd Street.

Where the bridge now crosses the Boone River was the site of McLaughlin's Ford, the stage coach river crossing point. On the west side of the river was the Angus McLaughlin home which served as a stage stop and hotel for travelers. The home was demolished in 1978.

Bach Grove

Continue on 173rd Street until Fisher Avenue/ R27. Turn right/north and then turn left/west onto 165th Street. This Street will make four jogs until you reach Doolan Avenue. Just before the last jog, towards the river, was the Bach Grove Settlement. Here is where the stage coach route you just followed met the Bach Grove Stage Line. It continued as a settlement and post office until 1881.

Russell's Grove

At the dead end, turn left/south onto Doolan Avenue. Turn left/east onto 180th Street. This street takes a couple of turns before it intersects with Fisher Avenue/R27. Turn right/south onto Fisher and follow it down to 220th Street/D20. Turn right/west. Go through Highview and turn left onto Chase Avenue. To your left was the former Russell's Grove Stage coach stop. It was the last stop in Hamilton County on the route to Fort Dodge, Webster County.

Homer

Continue on Chase Avenue and over the railroad tracks. Turn left/east onto 240th Street. Follow until Stage Coach Road/R21. Turn right/south and follow the Road around four curves until 290th Street. Turn right/west and again right onto Homer's Main Street. This is where the first stage coach line, came from the south in the county, and turned west to Fort Dodge. Homer was the first Hamilton County seat. This line was discontinued in 1858 when the county seat moved to Webster City.